

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OTTAWA 00263 222011Z

12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W

----- 106628

R 221737Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8595

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 0263

POUCHED TO ALL CONSULS IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP RACE

1. SUMMARY: THOUGH JUST BEGINNING TO WARM UP AND STILL TOO EARLY TO CALL, THE CP LEADERSHIP RACE IS MOVING IN UNINSPIRED FASHION TO EITHER WAGNER, MULRONEY, HELLYER OR PERHAPS MACDONALD AS NEXT TORY LEADER. ALL OF THE FRONT-RUNNERS HAVE LIABILITES WHICH MAY YET BRING AN UPSET, BUT PERHAPS THE MAJOR UPSET WOULD BE IF ANY COULD DEFEAT TRUDEAU WITHOUT THE LATTER GOING A LONG WAY TO DEFEAT HIMSELF.

2. GOING INTO FINAL MONTH, RACE NOW NARROWED TO ELEVEN CON-
TENDERS WITH WAGNER, MULRONEY, HELLYER AND ON OCCASION FLORA
MACDONALD CONSIDERED FRONT-RUNNERS. RECENT POLL
CONDUCTED BY MONTREAL DAILY LA PRESSE INDICATED THAT
WAGNER, AS ONLY GENUINE FRANCOPHONE IN RACE, HAS WON
SUPPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF 444 QUEBEC DELEGATES, ALTHOUGH
POLLING METHODS LATER QUESTIONED BY DAILY LE DEVOIR.
WAGNER NO DOUBT HOLDS LARGEST BLCO OF VOTES FOR FIRST
BALLOT, BUT TRUST FUND AFFAIR (REF OTTAWA 4402) AND UNCERTAIN SUPPORT
OUTSIDE OF QUEBEC LEAVE HIM VULNERABLE. HIS VOTES
APPEAR SOFT AND MAY DIMINISH ON SUBSEQUENT BALLOTS
UNLESS INITIAL SHOWING IS SUFFICIENTLY IMPRESSIVE TO
MAINTAIN MOMENTUM, I.E., AT LEAST 8 TO 9 HUNDRED VOTES
OUT OF 1300 NEEDED TO WIN. FEW GIVE WAGNER SUCH A LEAD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OTTAWA 00263 222011Z

AT THIS TIME.

3. THIRTY-SIX OLD BILINGUAL LAWYER BRIAN MULRONEY IS PROVING TO BE BOY WONDER OF RACE, CHANGING FROM VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN (EXCEPT AS MEMBER OF QUEBEC CLICHE COMMISSION CORRUPTION INQUIRY TO SERIOUS CONTENDER IN FEW MONTHS. THOUGH HANDICAPPED BY INEXPERIENCE IN FEDERAL POLITICS AND HAMPERED IN HOME PROVINCE BY WAGNER, HE HAS WON SUPPORT OF LEADERSHIP OF PC YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND BEEN SUBJECT OF THREE GENERALLY LAUDATORY COLUMNS BY PROMINENT GLOBE AND MAIL COMMENTATOR. HIS ACUTAL DELEGATE STRENGTH IS MUCH DISPUTED ANDPROBABLY NOT YET IMPRESSIVE, BUT HAVING CONSIDERABLE MONEY AS WELL AS NOTICEABLY MORE CHARISMA THAN RIVALS, HE IS CONTENDER MOST LIKELY TO GAIN GROUND IN COMING WEEKS.

4. HELLYER REMAINS ONLY CANDIDATE WHO HAS HAD EXPERIENCE IN HIGH FEDERAL OFFICE, THOUGH UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, AS A LIBERAL. HE HAS CORE OF SUPPORT THROUGHOUT COUNTRY WITH PARTICULAR STRENGTH IN ONTARIO, AND SPEAKS PASSABLE FRENCH. RUMOR HAS CIRCULATED THAT HE IS MOST ACCEPTABLE CANDIDATE TO DIEFENBAKER. OTTAWA CITIZEN COLUMNIST CHARLES LYNCH HAS PREDICTED HELLYER TO WIN ON SECOND OR THIRD BALLOT AS COMPROMISE FIGURE MOST ACCEPTABLE TO DIFFERENT FACTIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HELLYER HAS MOVED TO THE RIGHT OF OTHER SERIOUS CONTENDERS AND IS FAR FROM A CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY.

5. OF REMAINING CANDIDATES, FLORA MACDONALD MAY BE MOST LIKELY ON E TO STAGE UPSET. THOUGH STANDING SOMEWHAT TO THE LEFT OF OTHER CANDIDATES AND HAMPERED BY INABILITY TO SPEAK FRENCH, SHE HAS IMPRESSIVE ONTARIO AND MARITIME SUPPORT PLUS LARGE NUMBER OF DEBTS OWED TO HER FROM ACROSS COUNTRY FOR PAST PARTY SERVICES RENDERED. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE SHE IS ONLY CANDIDATE WHO COULD REALLY TIE TRUDEAU INTO KNOTS IN COMMONS. WHETHER THIS IS ENOUGH TO OVERCOME REPORTED OPPOSITION TO HER FROM DIEFENBAKER AND OTHER CP ESTABLISHMENT FIGURES IS, HOWEVER, SERIOUS QUESTION.

6. WITH RACE JUST BEGINNING TO WARM UP, NO MAJOR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 00263 222011Z

ISSUES HAVE THUS FAR EVERGED FROM IT, AND CANDIDATES APPEAR HARD-PRESSED TO RESIST TEMPTATION OF ATTACKING EACH OTHER RATHER THAN LIBERALS. LAW AND ORDER, RETURN TO WORK ETHIC, AND OPPOSITION TO ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM ARE MOST FREQUENT AND PREDICTABLE THEMES OF CAMPAIGN SPEECHES. WHILE CANDIDATES AGREE THAT TOP PRIORITY FOR PARTY IS TO TAKE VOTES FROM LIBERABLS, PARTICULARLY IN QUEBEC. TRUDEAU'S ECONOMIC CONTROLS

AND MUSINGS HAVE BEEN PRESSURING TORIES TO THE TRADITIONAL RIGHT. TRUDEAU IS CALLING THE ISSUES, AND THE CANDIDATES ARE JUST TRYING TO KEEP PACE TO REACT. GENERAL FEELING THAT ALL THE CONTENDERS ARE LOSERS WHO CANNOT BEAT TRUDEAU IN NATIONAL ELECTION PROMPTED GOLBE AND MAIL AND EDMONTON JOURNAL TO AGAIN APPEAL FOR LOUGHEED CANDIDACY LAST WEEK. IN UNELABORATED AND SOMEWHAT CRYPTIC STATEMENT, LOUGHEED DOUSED HOPES BY INSISTING THAT HE QUOTE CANNOT AND WILL NOT RUN UNQUOTE.

7. SYMPTOMATIC OF PUBLIC DISENCHANTMENT WITH CANDIDATES IS FACT THAT MP LEONARD JONES AND MONTREAL CONSTRUCTION MILLIONAIRE JOSEPH ZAPPIA RECEIVED MORE MEDIA ATTENTION LAST WEEK THAN SERIOUS CONTENDERS. JONES, OUSTED PREVIOUSLY FROM PARTY FOR HIS OPPOSITION TO LINGUALISM, AND ZAPPIA, FOUND TO HAVE FORGED AND DUPLICATED NAMES ON DELEGATE PETITION, WERE BOTH BARRED FROM RACE BY CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE, THOUGH EACH PLANS TO CONTEST DECISION I COURT. CUTTING DOWN NUMBER OF CANDIDATES AND GETTING RID OF LUNATIC FRINGE MAY HELP TORIES EMPHASIZE SERIOUSNESS OF RACE, BUT IT CANNOT FIRE UP PUBLIC ENTHUSIASM FOR ANY OF THE REMAINING CONTENDERS.
JOHNSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, ELECTION FORECASTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OTTAWA00263
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760026-0084
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760131/aaaabbju.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <02 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP RACE
TAGS: PINT, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006